

Michaud: President's VA Budget Needs Some Improvements

Thursday, February 08 2007

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs examined the President's Fiscal Year 2008 budget submission for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in a committee hearing. VA Secretary R. James Nicholson delivered testimony before the Committee, as did a host of representatives from veterans' service organizations, including those that annually develop and publish the Independent Budget (IB).

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"This 2008 budget proposal is a clear improvement over the Administration's past requests," said Congressman Mike Michaud, Chairman of the Health Subcommittee.

"We have a responsibility to make sure that the VA is provided with the funding that it needs, and that the VA spends those dollars in the best way possible for our veterans. During a time of war, it is unacceptable to cut funding for medical and prosthetic research that has helped to improve the lives of veterans and their families. Budgets are a reflection of our priorities, and the welfare of our veterans should be one of our highest priorities."

Overall, the President's Fiscal Year 2008 budget offered slight increases for VA medical care. The Administration has requested an increase of \$1.9 billion in appropriated dollars, an increase of 6 percent over FY2007.

VA Medical Care

(in thousands)

FY 2008

Request

FY 2007

Difference

FY 2008 IB

Medical Services

\$27,167,671

\$25,512,000

+\$1,655,671

\$28,979,220

Medical
Administration

\$3,442,000

\$3,177,000

+\$265,000

\$3,378,067

Medical Facilities

\$3,592,000

\$3,569,000

+\$23,000

\$3,991,152

Total Medical Care

\$34,201,671

\$32,258,000

+\$1,943,671

\$36,348,439

Medical and
Prosthetic Research

\$411,000

\$413,700

-\$2,700

\$480,000

"As the budget process moves forward, I look forward to working with the Administration to address the needs of our veterans," said Michaud. "I will also continue to explore ways to promote the recruitment of qualified medical personnel to serve in rural areas so that we can expand access to care and cut down on waiting times and backlogs."

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